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THE
HISTORY
OF

ALCIDALIS and ZELIDA.

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OF THE

FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

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NOTES

NOTES & PLAGIARISM



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TO THE READER,

*THE following historical tale
is taken from a manuscript (left by a
gentleman eminent in the literary world)
written for the amusement of some young
friends. If it affords you the entertain-
ment in perusing, as it did me in tran-
scribing, I shall think myself happy in
being the instrument of saving it from
oblivion; and at some future time may
finish the other part.*

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THE
H I S T O R Y
O F
ALCIDALIS and ZELIDA.

To Mademoiselle de R*****

FORMERLY when Spain was divided, not only among several kings, but also into several nations, of which the Goths, the Moors, and the Spaniards possessed every one a part, Arragon was governed by its own king, who, amidst all the wars in which his neighbours were con-

A 2 cerned,

cerned, always preserved his subjects in peace ; but was so famous for nothing, as his being father to the person whose history we are going to relate.

His wife, after having brought him one son, left him a widower ; sometime after which, the Countess of Barcelona, a young and virtuous princess, had the misfortune to lose her husband. Although the king was already well advanced in years, his council and subjects mutually agreed, that more than one heir was to be wished for the safety of his person, as well as to secure the succession ; and accordingly they begged of him to choose out of his own, or any foreign country,

country, some woman, that he thought agreeable, to be the partner of his bed. The fame of the virtue and beauty of the countess had spread itself much farther than the kingdom of Arragon. Besides that reasons of state would by no means have him neglect so favourable an opportunity of uniting his kingdom to a city of so great importance as that of Barcelona, the king himself resolved seemingly on the match. Rosalva (for that was her name) was beautiful enough, but was still more witty than fair, perceiving that she was now mistress of herself, nothing less than a sceptre could have induced her to think of a second marriage; but having only one daughter,

and

and the king of Arragon no more than one son, she thought by this match, she should not only make herself queen, but have it in her power to leave an hereditary kingdom to her daughter. And indeed as she lived amidst a great many neighbours, who were always forming some scheme to invade her territories, she was not to be blamed for securing herself, by accepting a crown; and was therefore easily persuaded to exchange the title of Countess of Barcelona, for that of Queen of Arragon; where she was received with the greatest marks of joy, and magnificence. Being young, beautiful, and well versed in politics, she found little difficulty in gaining an ascendant over
the

the king, from whom she soon obtained the reins of government; so that the most important affairs were determined by her advice. He immediately renounced all manner of care, but that of pleasing his princess, whose first, and greatest view (in the authority with which she was invested) was to marry her daughter to the prince: and the good opinion she always entertained of her step-son, daily increased her desire to forward the match.

Alcidalis, the young prince, was endowed with the greatest advantages nature could bestow on him; the least of which was his being heir to a crown. His person and graceful behaviour soon gained

gained him the affection of all who beheld him. His wit, even in his infancy, was not to be paralleled, and the magnanimity and courage he was even at that time master of, procured the respect and fear of all who were about him: the infancy of Alexander was not more noble and wonderful than that of Alcidalis. There was never a day passed, but he did something or other that surprised the court. They who were acquainted with the art of judging of men's fortune by their features, found in his countenance something that promised very great and incredible events. They who duly considered his actions, and the many amiable qualities he possess, said that the kingdom of

Arragon

Arragon seemed too narrow an empire for so great a mind as his promised to be. They well foresaw that the Moors (who were his father's neighbours) would one day be obliged either to submit to him, or to depend upon their safety by flying beyond seas, and that Spain would all be united into one empire, as soon as the prince should be able to draw his sword. These qualities made him better beloved by the queen, who was more acquainted with his inclinations than any one else; which made her wait with the greatest impatience, an opportunity to celebrate the marriage she had sometime before projected. Nor did she esteem it as so great an advantage for her daughter,

to be queen of Arragon, as to be wife of Alcidalis. Nevertheless, however we may abuse, or arraign fortune, we must yet own, that there is no wisdom in the world like hers ; her designs are laid so deep, and conducted in a manner so secret, that it is impossible for any foresight of ours to hinder their taking effect . in spite of all we can do, she is sure to succeed in her attempts. Thus she resolved to oppose the wisdom of Rosalva ; and in order to do that, chose for her instrument a young lady, who though both an orphan and stranger, defeated the design of a very politic and great queen.

The

The Prince of Tenarus descended of one of the most illustrious families of the kingdom of Calabria, and which had formerly given sovereigns to the kingdoms of Naples and Sicily, about that time succeeded to a great estate in Arragon, which, as his title was disputed, he resolved to go and see after it himself. But as he was a very kind husband, and both he and his princess were equally fond of their only daughter (a child of about five or six years old) they could not think of parting, and therefore transported themselves and their whole family into Arragon. Upon their arrival, they were received by the king and queen with all the civility and kindness that is due

to strangers, and to strangers of their rank and merit.

They had not however been long in that country, when the prince was seized with an illness, of which he died in a few days, and left his lady in so great grief, that it was thought she could not long survive him. The Queen of Aragon, to whose good graces she had recommended herself, gave her all the consolation that she could wish for in her affliction, and assisted her also in her other affairs. Rosalva indeed always found in the prince's a behaviour that pleased her, but after the loss of her husband, pity increased her former affection to such a degree, that she began

began to love her as herself. She made her lodge in the palace, and so assiduous and constant was her attendance on the distressed Camilla (the name of the princess) that she seemed to have lost something whenever Camilla was absent. But alas! all this care and tenderness, which might have cured any grief but hers, served only to alleviate a little her misfortunes, and to make her bear them with less impatience and despair.

And to tell truth, the death of the prince her husband, at such an evil conjuncture, was a stroke so terrible and so difficult to be born, that all the kind offices of the queen could
not

not hinder her from falling into a disease (occasioned partly by want of food and rest) which she thought would in a short time put an end to all her miseries.

This gave no small uneasiness to the queen, who earnestly wished to see her recover, and was sorry to think that two such illustrious persons should die in her dominions, and that in so short a time. In order to prevent which, she conjured all the physicians that were about her, in the most pathetic manner to practise the greatest secrets of their art ; but though at the queen's desire they left nothing undone that was in their power, in order to effect her recovery, Camilla's disease was not to be conquered by all their potions. She

was

was sensible of her own indisposition, and by the true judgment she formed of her disease, she knew as well as the physicians, that her hour was come, and therefore resolved to follow her husband with all the tranquility of mind that was possible for her to enjoy in that dying condition ; leaving her orphan daughter in an age so incapable of reason or reflection, in a strange country, where **she** could hope for no assistance, (except from the queen) in a court where she was going to die. Amidst those different reflexions, which did not fail to increase her disease, the queen, who visited her as often as possible, came to enquire how she was. Camilla cast her eyes gently towards
the

the queen, and took her by the hand,
which she kissed several times before she
could speak ; then all on a sudden she
addressed herself to her in the follow-
ing manner : " I am (said she) infinitely
" obliged to the best queen in the
" world, for the concern she takes in my
" health ; and since she does me the ho-
" nour to ask me herself a true account
" of my present state, I beg she will
" permit me to tell her, that I am very
" sensible how near death is approach-
" ing : that in my present condition,
" the thought of my dissolution is not
" that which gives me greatest pain ;
" but as I am fonder of my daughter
" than of any thing, even of life itself,
" I am more concerned at the thoughts
" of

" of leaving her, than at going out of
" the world." Having spoke thus,
she begged the queen to suffer her to
unbosom herself to her, and to tell her
the last, and most tender sentiments of
her soul,

First then, she heartily thanked God,
(who had so soon ordained her to follow
the prince her husband into the other
world) if before her departure, her
majesty would vouchsafe to accept of
the most valuable and most precious
gift, which (except her husband) she
had ever been mistress of in this world.
In speaking these words, she burst into
a flood of tears, which when she had
dried up as well as she was able, she

C proceeded

proceeded thus: That amidst all her misfortunes, she could not think fortune was absolutely her enemy, seeing that she had the honour of being acquainted with her majesty; and, that (excepting the loss of her husband) she could not but esteem her voyage to Arragon happy, although it had cost her life as well as his. That notwithstanding all these misfortunes, she could not but think, the happiness of being beloved by her, cheaply purchased: a happiness which she esteemed so great, that if there was any thing sublunary of which she could regret the loss, it was her friendship alone. But, that she comforted herself with the hopes that her daughter would succeed her, in
having

having her good graces. That she would be so good as to look upon her from that time as her daughter, and take care of her as one whom she had recommended with her latest breath. She begged that she would accept of that present, for by leaving her dear child in the new quality of the queen's daughter, she hoped that she would be more rich than in the possession of the two dutchies, of which she was to be left heirefs. That she died contented, and believed that her death would in some measure be a happy event for Zelida, since by that means she would have the honour of being educated by the wisest queen in the world. Having thus said, she took from beneath her pillow a little

box, filled with her most valuable jewels, which she gave her to keep, in order to give them one day to her daughter Zelida, and which she had brought from home with her for that purpose. This was the dying condition of the dutchess; and such were the words she spoke to Rosalva: and indeed had she but known the value or importance of the present, though in return for it she had asked the whole kingdom of Arragon, she would not have met with a refusal. The queen embraced her, and told her, that it was with infinite pleasure she received the present she made, on condition that she would not revoke the grant. I shall, added she, henceforth think I have two daughters;

daughters; nor shall I ever make any difference between them, but that Zelida shall always be reckoned the eldest. In the mean time, madam, do you take courage, for I hope you will yet live long enough to be a witness of the effects of your last promise. At these words Camilla seemed to be highly comforted, though her disease was not in the least abated. She survived this conference but two days, and then left the world overjoyed, like one that is delivered out of a prison. This event put all the court into mourning, particularly the queen, whose affliction is not easy to be described. Thus Zelida in the space of three months, saw both her father and her mother buried in
that

that country, to which they came in order to claim a succession ; and at six years of age, she was left in a strange country, and three hundred leagues distant from the place of her nativity ; and what she had still more reason to fear was, her being in the power of one, by whom her stars seemed to threaten her with all the evils of life. But fortune is the best mother in the world, and no misfortune can happen to those whom she has adopted her children. She took this orphan under her tuition, and though her first setting out seemed to oppose her happiness, yet at last set a crown upon her head. Zelida was, in a word, the masterpiece of nature : as her life was to be one continued wonder,

wonder, her person was no less so ; and this her history, which in all probability with every circumstance is only incredible in the account which is given of her. Since the sun first moved round the earth, he never beheld so consummate a beauty ; and within the finest outside in the world, she had a mind perfect beyond imagination ; it seemed to be one of those that are made to animate the heavenly bodies, and to direct the motion of the stars. In that age, wherein other children can hardly lisp the words, what she said would have been admired from the mouths of the most sage. Never was one so happily born as Zelida ; all the stars conspired to bestow on her their choicest gifts ;
and

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and heaven had endowed her with so many qualifications, that the least of them was her dwelling upon earth, for she seemed to be some celestial being dropt down miraculously from above. Her inclination was so strong to do good, that she seemed to do it necessarily ; and all the virtues were so natural to her, that without doing violence to her own nature, she could not help exercising them all. Never had she any struggle in her mind, never did she hesitate between good and evil ; in pursuing her own inclinations, she always followed the rules of justice and decency. Besides all the perfections that shone so bright in her, she was also possessed of those secret
good

good qualities and hidden graces which make us love those that are possessed of them, without knowing that they possess them in so eminent a degree; in short, Zelida was the admiration of the whole world. There was something so unaccountably charming in the whole series of her actions, that love and joy were diffused into the hearts of all that saw her; and even the sound of her voice had something in it which enchanted, and ravished the soul. She had indeed other innumerable good qualities which cannot be expressed, and the least of her perfections was, her being so modest as never to mention them. In a word, madam, she so much resembled you in every thing, that

D every

every one would have taken her for your sister ; and for my part, I could not help thinking of Zelida every time I had the honour of seeing you. Such a multitude of charms did she possess, that I own it would have been impossible for me to have remembered them, nor should I have been able to have recounted them so well, if I had not copied them from you.

Thus armed, Zelida must conquer the kingdom of Arragon ; and indeed she needed no others, since the performance of it entirely depended upon her winning the heart of Alcidalis, which no other power in the world could conquer. So universal was the joy,

joy, and with so much love and esteem was she received into the palace, that it was easy to foresee from thence, that she entered as mistress of it, and would one day have the chief command in it. The queen though she thought she could never be comforted for the death of the princess, yet could not help being pleased, and rejoiced whenever she saw Zelida ; and the king conceived an affection for her but little different from that which he bore to his own son. Alcidalis and Zelida were of that age, in which young people are wont to paint their love to each other ; and both of them were possessed of all the graces and attractions which the most famous painters could bestow upon

them. They were both equally beautiful, though their beauties were of different kinds ; and so extraordinary were the good qualities that shone forth in them both, that every one concluded that they were born for one another. Either of them would have been looked upon as a nonpariel, if they had not happened to have been contemporary ; for though they were both universally beloved, yet neither of them could have met with an equal flame, if they had not loved each other ; and no other souls could have been capable of so elevated and refined a passion as they both deserved. Thus the goddess of love, in order to give a conspicuous proof of her influence over mankind by

two

two so extraordinary persons, established her dominion over them so early, that they were in love with each other a long time before they were old enough to know they were so ; nor would she permit them to spend in quiet that early part of life, wherein nature seems to free us from passions. At first sight Zelida did not fail to make an impression upon the heart of Alcidalis, that she used to do upon all others ; and he raised in the mind of Zelida an emotion, with which till then she was unacquainted. The queen, in pursuance of the design she had formed on her being advanced to the crown, had used all the artifice that lay in her power, to make the prince fall in love with her daughter.

Ever

Ever since he had the faculty of speech, was accustomed to call her his mistress, and never a day passed but he was carried to see her ; those that were about him took every occasion to cry up her beauty and shape : but the inclination of Alcidalis did not agree with the queen's intentions. And he who to every one besides displayed so much sweetness and complaisance, seemed only reserved when in the company of the young countess ; infomuch that he never appeared under constraint except when he was with her. Whether it was the effect of his haughty spirit, which might be offended at their having ordained him to do any thing without first asking his consent, or that

his

his stars having allotted him for Zelida, gave him a secret aversion to any thing that seemed to rival her, I am not able determine. As soon as she had entered into the palace, and the queen had made her a companion to her daughter, the mind of Alcidalis seemed changed on a sudden; he never stirred from the young countess's apartment, nor was ever so happy as when he was in her company. Love, in order to meet with a good reception in the soul, must come attended with joy and beauty; nor does it ever offer any harm or violence, until it thinks itself master of the place, and so strongly fortified as not to be afraid of being dispossessed of its lodging. At first these two young ones

ones felt no extraordinary emotions within them, but seemed only alternately pleased at seeing one another; every time they beheld each other, they were touched with an unusual joy and sweetness, insomuch that every one imagined they mutually adored and embellished each other. Zelida, whose infancy seemed hitherto clouded, began to awake, and to be more cheerful than ordinary; and Alcidalis was so gay and agreeable when he saw her, that he seemed to reserve a certain air of gaiety and gracefulness whenever he was to appear in her sight. This state of innocence they quietly enjoyed during the space of several months; and indeed it was more happy than great part of their

their life which was to come after. But as their minds daily increased in strength, their passions also grew proportionably stronger ; and love at length grew so powerful, that it was easy to be perceived. Alcidalis began to be more reserved than ordinary, especially if he was out of Zelida's company, he never failed to shew a sorrow, from whence it was easy to see, that it was occasioned by his being robbed of that pleasure. No pastime or diversion could be agreeable to him, but those which he had in her company ; no pleasure could he relish except in her sight : and if when absent from her any thing could affect him, it was to speak of her, and to entertain him with her praises. The

E mind

mind of Alcidalis, which from his very infancy seemed intended to conquer the world, thought of nothing else now but to make a conquest of Zelida ; and if at any time some thoughts of his former ambition arose in his mind, it was only to put him in a condition to lay at her feet as many crowns as she deserved. Every time that he went out of her presence he seemed to be fallen down from heaven to earth : and going out of her company, he could bear nothing but solitude, which he employed in recollecting all the words and actions of Zelida ; and considering them all according to their different meanings, drew from thence either good or bad conjectures as they could bear. Then afterwards

afterwards contemplating every thing that he had said or done in her presence, he always found reason to repent something. Sometimes he found fault with himself for being too fearful, at other times for being too bold, and was still as much displeased with himself, as he was pleased with her. He began by agrees to abandon all those pleasures in which he formerly took delight. Hunting, which used to be his favourite exercise, now pleased him no more, if she was not present ; and if at any time he cared for those exercises, it was only that he might appear more agreeable in her eyes. In a word, he looked upon Zelida as the only thing upon earth that was worthy

of his regard, and all his thoughts and designs began, and centered in her alone. On the other hand, love had also pierced the heart of Zelida; it is true he had not made so great a progress there, nor displayed his power so much as in that of the young prince: whether knowing her natural elevation of mind, he durst not yet make himself acquainted with her, or being two years younger than Alcidalis, I am not able to determine. However that may be, she always felt some emotion in her heart as often as she beheld the young prince; on these occasions too, was more careful of her dress and beauty than on any others. He also began to be less in love with the queen's daughter,

ter, because she was intended to be his consort; yet the forced respect which he payed her (though even that began to be colder than usual) did not fail to make an impression upon her. Nevertheless as she was endowed with a soul great, exalted, and lively, and consequently of a passion no less so, the merit of Alcidalis, and his stars, which determined him to love her, made in time such an impression upon her, as nothing could ever make her forget, and created in her a flame as beautiful and perfect as herself.

Among people of distinction, love is like a great fire on the top of a hill, which cannot be concealed, and is seen afar

afar off. Thus the love of Alcidalis and Zelida was soon known throughout the whole empire, and many observed their being in love with one another sometime before they knew it themselves. In the beginning, whilst by reason of their childhood their actions were less observed, the pleasure they took in seeing one another, was looked upon to be nothing more than that which usually arises from children's playing together; but afterwards, when Zelida became more grave, as she advanced in years, and Alcidalis in all his actions displayed a wisdom and judgment capable of governing his father's kingdom, all the court began to think and to say, that their souls were united together by a true

true passion, and that it would cost a great deal of pains to separate them. The queen, who was continually upon the watch, minded nothing so much as the conduct of the young prince, began early to suspect the beauty of Zelida; and was one of the first that endeavoured to stop the mutual affection of the young lovers. But relying very much on her authority and wit, she believed she should meet with no resistance from two young persons, who were both subject to her power, since she had made the greatest and most importent men in the kingdom submit to her authority. The beauty of Zelida increased every day ; and her charms, which had only begun to peep (if I may

may so say) through the obscurity in which she had hitherto lived, now shone with such a lustre, that she seemed in that respect to declare herself openly the queen's rival, and in spite of all she could do, to gain universal esteem in the kingdom of Arragon. On the other hand, the young Alcidalis began to be sensible of his high birth, and the weight he must certainly have, as being heir to the crown; at length grew weary of his governors, and living in subjection to a woman. His soul, which was naturally great and heroic, began to swell, and to grow big with the passion with which love had inspired him; nor could he longer acknowledge any other empire than that of Zelida.

He

He began openly to discover the affection which he bore for her, and to grant no favours that were not asked through her recommendation. In all public places he was dressed in her livery, and had scarce any other subject of discourse than the beautiful Zelida ; nor could he ever suffer it to be said that any other than he should ever have any share in her affections. Every body favoured and wished them success in their loves, and made private vows for their prosperity. Their passion was the same with that of all the world, and their desires were seconded by all who knew, or heard of them. At last the queen herself began to be afraid, and to see that she had too long

F delayed

delayed to oppose a flame, which would cost her much pains, and perhaps oblige her to make use of violence to extinguish. At first however, being willing to try more gentle methods, she endeavoured by all means to regain the ascendant over Alcidalis, who seemed of late to be too wild for her to govern. She also made use of all the artifice she could to diminish and decry the beauty of Zelida, and to set off that of her own daughter to the best advantage. Rosalva was also at pains herself to instruct her in all the parts of her behaviour, and made her always appear in public with all the pomp and magnificence imaginable. She was never seen abroad but richly dressed, and adorned with the finest jewels.

jewels. Zelida, however, though negligently dressed, shone with much greater lustre; her brilliant eyes and beautiful complexion by far excelled the lustre of pearls and diamonds, and the gifts which nature had bestowed upon her, exceeded all the gems and treasures upon earth.

The queen therefore, seeing how much the presence of Zelida crossed her designs, and that with one single glance she blasted all her counsels, resolved to separate the young lovers, by sending away Zelida; hoping that by means thereof, absence might blot out the impressions which love had made in their yet young and tender minds; and

F 2 that

that those persons whom she had put about Alcidalis in order to gain him over, would find him more easily to be persuaded, when the object of his growing passion was no more in his sight. She therefore pretended, in order to recover her daughter Zelida (of a sickness into which she had lately fallen) she must send her into the country for two or three months, to a house which she had in Catalonia; and after having communicated her resolution to the king, she immediately gave orders to prepare every thing necessary for her journey, and at the same time ordered that none but her women should attend her. It is impossible to represent the astonishment with which our two lovers were

were struck on hearing this news. Hitherto they had not tasted any of the bitter pangs of love, having only diverted themselves, as it were, among lilies and roses. They had quietly, and without interruption enjoyed themselves in each other's company, (and except some apprehensions of their future hardships, which could not be very strong in two persons so very young and confident of one another) their joy had been without trouble, and unclouded. Indeed Alcidalis was most grieved at this disappointment, or at least, he was of the two less able to dissemble his grief. He neglected nothing that he thought might break the queen's resolution, and painted in his own imagination,

imagination, the direful effects that such a parting might occasion. After all, perceiving that there was no help, and that the time of Zelida's departure approached, he resolved at least not to let her go without first declaring to her in a public manner, the affection he had for her, and to shew her in what quality she left him. He had hitherto lived with her without ever mentioning his passion, though indeed he had discovered it in all his actions, and perhaps without having done so, his words could never have been a competent demonstration of his passion : whether it was that the bashfulness and modesty that is common to children of that age, hindered him, or being quite satisfied with

with the pleasure of seeing her, never thought of making any further declaration, I shall not venture to say. The night before Zelida's departure being come, he went to the queen's apartments, where, after having staid some time, he was at last so happy as to find means to be alone with Zelida. This was the first time Alcidalis had ever shewn any signs of fear; he endeavoured two or three times in vain to tell what he had before resolved; at length, strongly intending to speak, but (unable to express his love) he was obliged to talk upon some other subject. He used formerly to be enflamed at sight of Zelida, but now he found an icy coldness diffuse itself over

him

YRS

him whilst he was in her company. At last however, after some common conversation, with a throbbing heart, and a feeble and trembling voice, he began thus. " I doubt not, Zelida, but you are sensible I love you, but I am sure you know not how much ; and because your absence, though but for a few days, will seem to me many years, and that I do not know that I shall see you return, I intend to tell you that I love you ; so that if I am dead before your return, you may at least know how much you ought to lament my death. If you consider yourself well, and me too, you may judge that it is no ordinary flame you have raised in me ; and if there is any

" any thing in me more agreeable than
 " usual, you may easily see that it is
 " owing to the regard I have for you.
 " By the knowledge you have of
 " yourself and of me, you may soon
 " imagine how sincere, how respectful,
 " and how constant my love is; but
 " how great it is you know not.
 " That indeed is above imagination;
 " even I who feel it, cannot express
 " it, nay nor very often comprehend
 " it. The moment I first saw you,
 " my passion was as great as the greatest
 " loves after long continuance; and
 " ever since then, it has been increas-
 " ing. Whilst I was a child, I could
 " not tell it you; and since then I
 " durst not. Even now I tremble to

G

" tell

“ tell you, I adore you; and if you
“ do not shew me some mark of a
“ favourable return, I shall not be
“ able to say all that I intend to
“ speak upon this occasion.” Zelida,
who had hitherto looked with a de-
clining eye, cast her eyes gently to-
wards him. Alcidalis imagined that
he saw heaven opened in her eyes,
and resuming courage, he continued
thus : “ It is true, Zelida, I know
“ that the passion I have for you is
“ the most perfect that ever was, but,
“ alas ! I know not if it be lawful for
“ any thing human to love you. I
“ must confess ingenuously, that I was
“ unacquainted with the virtue of hu-
“ mility till your awful looks inspired
“ me

" me with it. I was always vain
 " enough to think that the whole
 " world was too little for me, but
 " now I think myself below your
 " regard; and by as much as I think
 " every one else beneath me, so much
 " do I think myself below your merit.
 " I am persuaded that my fortune is
 " the least thing you consider about
 " me; nor do I think myself in any
 " thing so unhappy, as that you do
 " not discover in me some qualities
 " which you esteem more than those
 " which my birth gives me. But if
 " I possess any thing worthy of you,
 " it is this heart, of which I make you
 " a present, and which, I flatter my-
 " self is great and noble enough to

“ be received by yours. Nor would
“ I speak so freely in its praises, if it
“ was still mine. I only commend it,
“ madam, as I do every thing else
“ that belongs to you. Since ever it
“ knew any thing, it has had in view
“ but two main designs. The first,
“ which it has entertained from its in-
“ fancy, has been the conquest of the
“ world ; but since it has been more
“ reasonable, it has desired Zelida.
“ If the adorable Zelida will be but
“ mine, there will be no difficulty in
“ putting the other design in execution,
“ and the crown of Arragon, which I
“ now promise her, and which all my
“ enemies cannot hinder me from
“ giving, shall be but a small part of
“ those

" those things I will lay at her feet."

Having said thus, Alcidalis stood silent for some time, waiting for Zelida's answer, who was in so great concern, that it was with some difficulty that she pronounced these few words which follow: " Sir, I am surprised to hear you speak so seriously on such a subject, and to observe how every one takes notice of our conversation.

" I am at present at a loss what to say, and must beg leave to delay giving you any answer until I return.

" Meantime, on that account, I hope you will believe I shall be glad the time of my absence be as short as possible." Whilst they were thus speaking together every one held their eyes

eyes fixed upon them, and observed that Alcidalis spoke to Zelida with greater attention than usual. The queen, who above all others had greatest reason, was very uneasy at this conversation, and rising out of her seat, came up to them, and fetching a deep sigh, addressed herself to Alcidalis in the following manner :

“ Sir, you speak to Zelida with so much action, and with an air so serious, that I cannot but think you have difference with her ; if so, complain to me, I will be of your party, and will oblige her to give you satisfaction before she go.”

Alcidalis, who after having made the first effort, and had once discovered his

his love to Zelida, again took courage, and would have been well pleased to have continued the conversation, was extremely vexed to see himself interrupted ; and without regarding her as queen, answered haughtily, “ Madam, “ I know Zelida is so just, that if she “ had done me any wrong, I would “ ask no one to judge between us but “ herself. Nobody need meddle with “ our differences ; and whatever quar-“ rel we may have between ourselves, “ I shall never love those who endea-“ vour to separate us.” This haughty answer was taken notice of by all that heard it ; and the queen was more offended than any, yet seemed to take least notice of it, and immediately changed

changed the subject of their conversation. Next morning Zelida set out very early, before Alcidalis could speak with her, and leaving the prince in a deep melancholy, which yet sat heavier upon herself, being obliged to conceal it, and to smile in company whilst she inwardly shed tears of blood.

Of all the miseries that attend love, that of absence is sure the most sensible. There are indeed some griefs (such as that of jealousy) which are more pungent and piercing, but none so heavy and insupportable. The first thing that Alcidalis did, after seeing Zelida take coach, and looking after her as long as she continued in sight,

was

was to retire alone into his chamber, where, after having shut the door, he threw himself upon the bed, and after bursting forth into a flood of tears and sighs, lamented Zelida, as if she had been really dead. But why dost thou complain, O Alcidalis? thou hast quietly enjoyed the pleasure of seeing Zelida all thy life hitherto, and canst not thou endure one week's absence? Remember that love lends all his joys at great interest; he must be repaid of all when he pleases. Nor does he commonly suffer such debtors as you are to be so long in arrear. You are one of those who have used him very well; reserve therefore those tears for another occasion, when they

will be better employed. The time will soon come wherein you will have greater reason to complain, and the day is approaching in which Zelida and you will be yet more cruelly separated, and without hopes of ever seeing one another again. Alcidalis spent the whole day without seeing any company; nor would he speak one word for several days after, only when he went to see the king, he could not help answering such questions as he asked. But still he looked so languishing, and seemed so uneasy when he spoke, that it was easily perceived his heart was not at home. At last, after having spent eight days in the greatest affliction and impatience

tience imaginable, he thought he was going to die, and that it was a thousand years since he parted from Zelida; insomuch, that as he was alone one night in his chamber, indulging his melancholy, without consulting any thing but the dictates of his own inquietude and desires, he resolved to go and see her. And though he foresaw that such an attempt might cost him his life, yet finding he could not live without her, he thought his condition could not be worse, and therefore determined to undertake the journey.

After the Ebro, which is one of the most famous rivers in Spain,

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has washed the walls of Saragossa, (as if there was nothing else in Arragon worthy its notice) it runs through the province of Catalonia, where having in its passage received several small rivers, in order to fall into the sea with greater magnificence, it at last disembogues itself in the ocean nigh Tortosa. All the country through which it runs is extremely fertile and woody, being much more agreeable than the other places thereabout, which for the greatest part consist of dry barren plains, or mountains burnt black by the heat of the sun. Fifteen leagues from the mouth runs through a vally about two leagues in length and two in breadth, inclosed by mountains

tains on both sides. In this place the river runs very softly, occasioned by high rocks which obstruct its passage about four leagues lower; it also forms several windings in the plain, running from one side to the other, as if it was doubtful what course to take through the mountains. The banks are green and covered with trees; the river so smooth and clear, that there is not a tree or a flower upon the bank which is not reflected by the water, and that with all the beauty and exactness which they have on land. The most common trees in that country are the holm, the olive, and the pine; and besides that, it is never cold there.

The

The mountains of Catalonia screen it from the north wind, insomuch that a perpetual verdure is seen throughout the valley ; nor is there ever any winter, such as there is commonly seen on the neighbouring mountains. In this paradise was situated the queen's house, wherein Zelida was confined. It is said her presence calmed the rushing of the waters, and made the plants and flowers look more fragrant and blooming. She alone appeared sorrowful among so many agreeable objects, and daily lost part of that beauty which she seemed to add to every thing about her. The absence of Alcidalis afflicted her greatly, but above all she feared the queen's designs ;

sighs; and so lively did she paint her future misfortunes in her own imagination, that very often the fear of them added horror to her present condition. She saw that her jewels, her estate, and her person were in the queen's power ; and what she feared most of all, that Alcidalis was in the same condition : he who was dearer to her than her jewels, her estate, and even her own self. She considered that the prince's love was not of the common sort ; that his courage was also great, but that his authority was small. That those who were about him would not suffer him to refuse the country of Barcelona, together with the queen's daughter, and instead of her to marry

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an orphan, a stranger, who had neither estate nor fortune but beyond seas. That he alone could not resist the solicitations of the king his father, and the whole kingdom, and that both were absolutely subject to the queen's will. That so long as they were children, every one had approved of their loves, but that nobody would approve of their marriage. That some looked upon her as an enemy to the state, and as a spark that would one day create a division, and kindle a fire in the royal family. These, and such like reflections, tormented her mind with a thousand troubles. The farther she extended her views into futurity, the less foundation could she find for hope ;

hope ; and in the labyrinth in which she was then involved, without knowing what would be the event of her adventures, she concluded it would not be happy. One day as she went out with the queen, who used to walk in a very thick wood, the walks of which led into a field that served as a bank to the river, Zelida broke off from the rest of the company, attended only by one of her maids. Indeed it was no small comfort to her that she was at liberty not only to be pensive and sorrowful, but also to appear so. Thus representing in her mind the misfortunes of her own life which were already past, and comparing them with those which yet threatened her, so much

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was she lost in thought, that without minding where she went, she found herself upon the bank of the Ebro, and in a place so agreeable, that it would have diminished any sorrow but hers. The sun, who sets in the ocean towards that country, and appears more beautiful there than in any other climate, was then just going to hide himself in the clouds of gold and azure, in which he shrouds himself when he goes to visit the sea nymphs ; but having seen nothing since he rose so beautiful as Zelida, he seemed, in order to have a longer view of her, to make less haste in his descent into the waves ; and so strongly did he gild all the leaves of the trees, and particularly

particularly the river, that his beams seemed to gather new light, to prolong the day on Zelida's account ; surrounding her in such a manner, and agreeing so well with her beauty, that it was doubtful whether the rays proceeded from the sun, or from her. The charms of this delicious place, the fineness of the air, and the pleasure of finding herself alone, conspired to make her walk forward into the field. After she had staid there sometime, and was returning again to find the queen, the sound of a horn, which did not seem to be at a great distance, made her cast her eyes towards the neighbouring mountains, where having looked for sometime, she thought she saw two men

wrestling together, and just going to fall down from the top of a rock, and having by the way struck among thorns which grew below; she at last perceived, that what she had believed to be two men, was one man and a bear, of a prodigious size, engaged together, but with so great disadvantage, as may be well supposed in so unequal a conflict. At the same time, not far from the place where the man fell, she saw a young gentlemen coming, well mounted, with a hunting horn flung over his shoulder, and a spear in his hand; having stopped sometime, and seeing the danger of the other man (who seemed to be his companion) he rode forward, or rather threw himself

himself down from the rock after him ; yet such was the strength of the horse, the agility of the rider, or rather the good fortune of both, that neither of them fell, or were even so much as hurt, so that he immediately rode up to the bear and wounded him so deeply in the belly with his spear, that he was obliged to quit his hold and fall down dead at the same time. So quickly did he descend to deliver his friend, and so suddenly did he kill the bear, that it may be partly said, even thunder itself does not descend with more speed, or has a surer effect. Zelida was sorry that any one except Alcidalis should have given that blow, and was concerned that any one else should
effect

effect what would have given him so much pleasure to have done. But the gentleman riding forward, and fording the river that was opposite to her, she began to doubt if it was not Alcidalis himself. As he approached, she began to know him; but not being sure, stepped back to her servant, and asked her if she knew that gentleman who was coming up. Madam, replied she, we might have easily known by the generous and brave action, who it is, but now I see it is the prince. He was by that time advanced within twenty paces of them, when the mind of Zelida was alternately possessed with joy, fear, and astonishment, that she was not able to

express

express one word for the first compliment. The prince, who had better prepared himself for the meeting, though even the emotions of his heart had more boldness than hers, began thus : " Madam, though I did not know that this was the place of your abode, yet when I saw the fields so covered with verdure and enamelled with flowers, and the banks so finely adorned with trees, it was easy to guess that you could not be far off. Nothing but your presence could make so many beautiful flowers spring up in so desert a country, or could perform such a miracle on the mountains of Catalonia." " Sir, (replied Zelida,

" who

“ who had by that time recollect^d
“ herself a little) you are ungrateful
“ to the Ebro, on the banks of which
“ you stand, and which seems to have
“ formed this plain on purpose to
“ facilitate your passage, to ascribe
“ unto me a glory due to the fertility
“ of its waters, which so carefully
“ water and nourish those plains ; in-
“ somuch, that when you consider the
“ beauty of this place, and particularly
“ of this park, into which we are going
“ to enter, you will own that the
“ palace of Saragossa, and the mag-
“ nificence of the Moorish kings may
“ be easily left sometimes to enjoy so
“ agreeable a retirement. I must yet
“ confess, sir (added she with a sigh)
“ that

" that I have never yet seen any
" thing so beautiful on that mountain
" as what you lately shewed me."
" And (replied the prince, with an
" oath, intending at the same time to
" change the subject) when I looked
" from the top of yonder mountain
" upon the country round about me,
" I could see nothing so charming as
" that which you now shew me in
" this valley." They were now ad-
vancing toward that part of the wood
where the queen was, and the fervant
who followed them falling a little be-
hind, Zelida lowering her voice, said,
" Sir, you have this day done two
" very bold actions, first to throw
" yourself from the top of yonder

“ rock to fight with so wild a creature ; and secondly, to come to visit the queen at a time when she so little expected you.” “ Madam, (replied he) I should have shewn a much greater degree of courage if I had staid at Saragossa. By so doing I should have bravely withstood death itself, which it was impossible to avoid, had I staid any longer out of your sight ; insomuch, that what you are pleased to call the effect of courage, is on the contrary, a want of it ; since I came hither to shun a greater danger than both these you have mentioned.” “ I cannot think so (replied Zelida) for, as for my part, though I could not

" not have courage enough to have
 " encountered the bear, far less to
 " have offended the queen ; yet me-
 " thinks I could have endured the
 " pain of absence." " But, madam,
 " (replied Alcidalis) in order to know
 " the pain and effects of absence,
 " you must first know what it is to
 " be in love ; for that reason you
 " can never know what love is, be-
 " cause you never ought to love any
 " thing but yourself, as you carry
 " along with you wherever you go,
 " all that is lovely on earth." " You
 " are not in earnest, Alcidalis (replied
 " Zelida) in what you say, for if you
 " had thought me such an ungrateful,
 " and so vain a person as you have

K 2 " repre-

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 " had thought me such an ungrateful,
 " and so vain a person as you have

K 2 " repre-

“ represented me, you would not have
“ been so impatient to see me again.
“ But in order to give you further
“ information, hear me a few words,
“ and permit me to answer you those
“ questions you asked me at Sara-
“ gossa.” In speaking this, she per-
ceived a blush diffuse itself over all her
face, and that Alcidalis also took
notice of it. She continued thus: “ I
“ assure you, sir, that the colour you
“ see in my face is to me unaccus-
“ tomed, and proceeds rather from
“ what I am going to say, than from
“ any thing else. After all, I do not
“ know if it is always immodest for a
“ woman to own she is in love; only
“ this I am sure of, that if it is ex-
“ cusable,

" cusable, it is more so in me than
" any other. I will not say that my
" stars have done violence to my
" passion, or that the good qualities
" that you are master of, have obliged
" me to be in love. No, these are
" the common pretences of every
" lover; I will only tell you in my
" own defence, what is peculiar in
" my passion. Before I knew that I
" ought not to be in love, I knew
" that you was lovely; I was in love
" with you before I knew that it was
" forbidden our sex to accept the
" vows and promises of yours: nor
" can I be blamed for yielding to a
" passion, which I may say I found
" coeval with my heart, instead of
" being

“ being received into it, and which
“ is always so strong and constant
“ there, that I can no more remem-
“ ber the beginning of it, than the
“ day that gave me birth. The first
“ thought that I ever remember to
“ have had was on your account.
“ Self-love, which is so soon felt in
“ us, and is so natural to every body,
“ did not arise in my soul so early
“ as the affection which I have had
“ for you. Reason, which did not
“ appear for some time afterwards,
“ found itself anticipated by the love
“ of you; and so strongly was it
“ established, that it seemed part of
“ itself; and the more innocent and
“ just that it appeared, the more did
“ reason

“ reason endeavour to fortify, rather
“ than destroy it. This I say to
“ vindicate my conduct both to you
“ and myself, and to assure you, that
“ the most courageous and prudent
“ heart in the world would have been
“ ensnared as well as mine. If, there-
“ fore, you have any value for my
“ love, pardon the ingenuous con-
“ fession that I have just made to you,
“ and let us rather thank the gods,
“ who have so ordained it. If you
“ think yourself obliged to me for
“ such a free declaration, if I have
“ not strength sufficient to extinguish
“ the love I have for you, at least I
“ have power to conceal it. I could,
“ like the rest of my sex, have dis-
“ sembled

“ sembled it, or shewn it by de-
“ grees ; but that would have been
“ unreasonable, and unworthy both
“ of you and me, it will never be time
“ to discover it to you ; and if on the
“ contrary, my passion be such as I
“ ought to have to render me wor-
“ thy of Alcidalis, why ought you to
“ be displeased that I discover it, and
“ assure you of the strength of it. I
“ tell you therefore, Alcidalis, I love
“ you ; and though I cannot help
“ blushing while I say so, yet I can
“ tell it without shame. I willingly
“ receive the heart you say you have
“ given me ; as to the crown you
“ promise me together with it, let
“ Fortune dispose of it as she pleases.

“ I know

" I know the value of what you have
" already given me to be better than
" any thing she can bestow; and I
" esteem your love above all the
" riches of your kingdom. It is with
" infinite pleasure that I have observed
" that there is not a quality in you
" which is not truly royal; but I wish
" your birth had not been so. The
" crown that you promise me as a
" happiness, will, I fear, be the cause
" of all my misfortunes. In order to
" rob me of what I esteem best in
" you, I am afraid no arts will be
" neglected to deprive me of all the
" rest. I know your affection will
" procure me the envy of all my sex;
" and instead of being of service to

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" me

“ me, your love will do me much
“ harm. But one who with the heart
“ of Zelida has that also of Alcidalis,
“ ought to fear nothing. I will combat
“ all my misfortunes with a degree of
“ courage that will astonish you; and
“ since it is the will of heaven that I
“ should love you, I will persevere in
“ it with so much virtue, strength, and
“ constancy, that what is commonly
“ found fault with in the rest of my
“ sex, in me shall be the subject of
“ praise and esteem.” Alcidalis, who
since Zelida began to speak trembled
for fear, like one who is going to re-
ceive sentence of death, hearing in
what manner she spoke to him, and
finding that it was in a more favour-
able

able manner than he expected, could hardly believe his own ears. At last, being convinced of the truth of what he had heard, he was so transported with joy, that he could not utter one word, to thank her. Indeed he needed none to do that: the tears of joy which he shed on that occasion, were a better proof of his gratitude and sincerity than all the power of words. But turning aside into another walk, and finding that he was out of the view of every mortal but Zelida, he fell on his knees upon the ground. Just as he was going to speak, he espied the queen at the other end of the walk; who being before informed of Alcidalis's arrival, came herself to receive

L e him.

him. The length of the walk was not so great, but that one might easily see all that was done in it ; Alcidalis therefore rose up as quickly as he could, and Zelida, who was heartily vexed at the thought of being found alone with him, said, “ Sir, this ill-timed humility will cost you dear, and this beginning will, I am afraid, bring to pass all my most dismal apprehensions.” “ Madam (replied the prince) I can fear nothing as long as you are on my side ; for so long as we continue together, we shall be too strong for all the world besides.” “ For that reason (added Zelida) there will be soon found means to separate us.” Whilst they were

were thus speaking, they looked indifferently at each other, or rather looked towards that way where the queen came. Her majesty with her retinue were now very nigh, and having advanced a few steps, came up to Alcidalis, and received him with such an air, and smiling countenance, that hardly could Zelida herself have done more. The first compliments being over, and the prince telling her that he had been hunting, and the chace had carried him within seven or eight leagues of her house, he thought himself obliged to come and kiss her hand. The queen seemed to thank the fortune that brought him there. " But, " sir, (continued she) I believe you
" are

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" are

“ are already rewarded for the trouble
“ of coming here : I suppose it must
“ be some extraordinary favour you
“ have lately received of Zelida, since
“ in order to thank her, I saw you
“ was obliged to fall down on your
“ knees. Indeed at first I could not
“ be persuaded that it was you in that
“ humble posture, but rather took it
“ to be some of your attendants ; but
“ am very glad to find that none else
“ but you has had that pleasure. Tell
“ me then, I beseech you, what the
“ favour is, or what present she has
“ promised to make you, that I may
“ either congratulate you, or thank
“ her in your behalf.” For all this
Zelida did not blush ; nor indeed had

she

she ever reddened since she spoke her mind so freely to Alcidalis. Fearing therefore that Alcidalis would hardly be able to disengage himself of so dangerous a subject, (as on emergencies women are more ready witted than men) she stepped towards the queen, and made answer for him thus :
“ Madam, the reason of your seeing
“ the prince in a kneeling posture
“ was, when I asked him the news at
“ Saragossa, he (reflecting I suppose
“ on the pleasure he had taken in
“ hunting) neglected to answer me.
“ I found fault with his meditation
“ and silence, which made him kneel,
“ in order to give me satisfaction ;
“ thinking by that immoderate and
“ to

" to respectful behaviour, to atone
" for the small observation I made
" on his silence." " It was very civil
" in him (replied the queen, coldly)
" and because you thought the prince
" could not remember that, you
" undertook to make answer for him."

Zelida finding herself pressed so hard upon by the queen, began to be at a loss; and thinking that she could not be any longer able to conceal the hatred she bore to the queen, was resolving immediately to let it appear to the world. Alcidalis, however, perceiving the concern she was in, came to her assistance, as she had before done to his, and changed the subject into that of hunting. He was so overjoyed at the words

words which Zelida had spoken to him, while alone with her, that he entertained the queen all that day with an uncommon complaisance, and was also more guarded in his expressions to Zelida. But the two young lovers were not cunning enough to deceive. The extraordinary gaiety of the prince easily discovered the change of his temper; nor could the princess in her turn, avoid shewing such a behaviour as made the queen conclude, that addresses were not in vain. From these circumstances she saw she had now no time to lose; and from that moment formed the resolution which cost our young lovers so many tears, and so much anxiety.

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Fortify

Fortify thyself, O Alcidalis, against those evils which threaten thee, and count the pleasure thou hast enjoyed to-day, as the last thou art to receive from the hands of fortune. Expect no more to enjoy the friendship of fortune ; content thyself with that of Zelida. Next day the prince went away to Saragossa ; and the queen, without whom nothing could be done at court, was obliged to go there eight days after. Alcidalis had born that absence with more patience than the former, having diverted himself during that time with such agreeable and pleasing thoughts, as made him happy. But as a fine day is still finer than the finest night ; and as there is no perfect

perfect contentment in darkness, it seems that the presence of Zelida had diffused a new joy in his soul, and given new taste to those pleasures which he could not relish entirely without her. Thus they continued some months together in so great contentment, that from thence alone it was easy to foresee it would not be of long continuance, and that so great a calm would be succeeded by a very great tempest. The pleasure which Alcidalis at this time enjoyed, made him behave with greater discretion than formerly ; he also stood more in awe of the queen's displeasure, and spoke seldom to Zelida, contenting himself with the liberty of seeing her. She also, who from

her infancy had always been serious and grave in her deportment, began to be much more so : she spoke to the prince with greater respect, and gave him fewer opportunities of being in her company, and was also more fearful that their love would be observed. But all this discretion, like that of most lovers, came too late, the queen would not suffer herself to be abused by it, but with all the care, secrecy, and diligence imaginable, gave orders for the execution of her intended project. As they who live on a spot of earth under which a mine is going to be sprung, are commonly more afraid of all other dangers than that which is going to destroy them,

abide

abide in quiet while others are digging their tomb, and busy in preparing that ruin, which must in a moment undo them; so did our two lovers continue in a profound tranquility, without so much as suspecting the treachery that was preparing against them. If at any time the implacable hatred of the queen gave them occasion to apprehend any misfortune, they yet could never imagine it either so great, so nigh, or of that kind which was to happen. From that time, however, the misfortunes of Zelida and Alcidalis began to appear; such disasters as seemed to have no end; adventures so strange and chequered, that if they are hardly credible, it is

no less so to imagine how they were invented, and that they are not the pure effects of imagination.

Fortune, it seems, thought the kingdoms of Arragon and Catalonia were too confined a theatre whereon to represent the finest subject she ever had in the world ; and for that reason chose one more spacious, changing all on a sudden the face of affairs from what they had hitherto appeared. Till now we have seen nothing but the cities of Saragossa and Barcelona, or mountains, fields, huntins, and walks ; hereafter we shall see the wide ocean, Europe, and Africa ; strânge faces, and people whose names have hardly been recorded ;

recorded ; ships pillaged and burnt ; duels and fights. And what is yet more strange, the hardships of war and the softness of courts at the same time, and in the same person.

Yours, &c.

(52)

around his leg like a thin cord
in a similar manner to the barbs
of a fishhook. The cord was
about half an inch thick and
was wound round the barbs.



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